

**REMARKS**

After entry of this Amendment, claims 1-13 will be all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to require the partially neutralized polyacrylate to be one of the two polymers in the gel. Claims 4-8 have been amended to depend on the independent or singly dependent claims recited therein.

Support for amended claim 1 may be found in the specification, e.g., at Examples 1-5.

Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

**Preliminary Matters**

(A) Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's election without traverse of the invention of Group I, encompassing claims 1-8. Accordingly, claims 9-13 are withdrawn from further consideration.

(B) Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim of priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2002-178612, filed June 19, 2002.

**Claim Objections**

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 4-8 are objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being in improper form.

In response, claims 4-8 have been amended to depend on the independent or singly dependent claims recited therein.

Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

**Claim Rejections -35 U.S.C. § 102**

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Syudo (EP 1151751).

In response, and while not admitting that this rejection is appropriate, claim 1 has been amended to require the partially neutralized polyacrylate to be one of the two polymers in the gel.

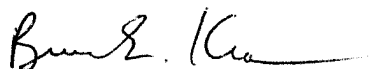
Accordingly, present claim 1 is believed to overcome this rejection, and further, claims 2 and 3 are also patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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